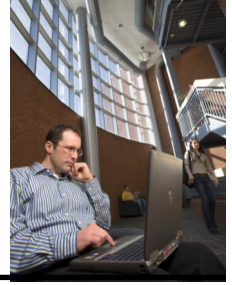


Michael White
Aviation Mate—Coast Guard



*Did you ever wonder how some people achieved the job/career they have?
How did they get there? Did they always know what they wanted to do?
Is there any way I could do some of the things they have done?*

We hope to answer those questions and more as we introduce you to **Penn State DuBois** alumni in a variety of fields from business to wildlife, from occupational therapy assistant to engineering technology, etc. Their stories will be featured here over the upcoming months.

Join us now as we profile Michael White, a recent Penn State DuBois graduate in business administration. From the Coast Guard to college to the work force...*Michael's adventure begins here!*

Early Experiences

Michael was raised in the Cooks' Forest Region of Northwestern Pennsylvania. While not a stellar student because he was not motivated, Michael was very involved in sports. He participated in track, downhill and cross-country skiing, and baseball. He was active in the Boy Scouts and knew from an early age that he wanted to continue the family tradition of serving in the Coast Guard.

At the age of 17, he followed in the steps of his father and grandfather and joined the Coast Guard, with a waiver signed by his parents to allow him to join. He knew he would not do well

going on to college at that time and saw the military as a way to garner the leadership experience he sought and to make the military his career.

While acknowledging that boot camp was tough, as he traded all the freedom he had enjoyed for military structure, Michael knew he "...had chosen to be there." A one-year assignment in Washington State was followed by Aviation School in North Carolina.

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Aviation School was perfect for Michael who loved to fly and “always liked the seat next to the window” on commercial flights. In his first 20 months in the Coast Guard, Michael achieved an E4 rating as an Aviation Mate. After 5 years in the Coast Guard, Michael felt he had leadership abilities but was not having the opportunity to get the leadership roles he wanted. “70 to 80 guys went after each promotion; promotions were tough to get.” says Michael.

An opportunity to be reassigned to Michigan presented itself and Michael moved once again. His duties in Michigan were to find ways to let people know about the Coast Guard and what it can do, so that they would be more likely to think about and call the Coast Guard when appropriate. Michael went to area schools, scheduled fly-overs for various events, traveled and met people, all the while presenting the Coast Guard message. The location and the job were great, but he was no closer to securing the leadership roles he wanted.

At the end of the enlistment, and with 8 years of Coast Guard service, Michael left the military. The Coast Guard was making across the board cuts and provided few opportunities for advancement.

Time for College!

A stint at Appleby’s Restaurant provided Michael with the opportunity to get into a managerial program. He not only waited tables, but also trained waiters and found himself doing everything except attending “Apple University”. Michael wrestled with a number of career questions which finally crystallized in one question he asked himself. “Am I going to continue to wander or get into a leadership position?” His answer, 2 years after leaving the Coast Guard, was to begin a college education, which now made perfect sense to him as a way to do what he wanted to do all along!

Michael enrolled in correspondence courses through Penn State University, while simultaneously working several jobs. The correspondence courses were “paper and pencil”; internet courses were still on the horizon. The decision on which college to attend was the easiest part of the decision. His Dad was a Penn State alum and Michael knew a great deal about the quality of the University.

Still, “Receiving the package in the mail with all of the course materials was intimidating. Many times, I asked the question ‘How can I do it myself?’” says Michael. Drawing on the discipline learned in the military and now possessing the motivation he lacked in high school, Michael tackled his first three credit course.

The correspondence course involved extensive writing and no participation grade! Michael was glad he liked to write!

After completing 2 courses at a time each year for 5 years, a total of 30 credits, Michael “needed to go to campus to interact with professors.”

By this time, 15 years had passed since Michael had been an “official” student. Going back to school, from a financial perspective, meant returning home; his parents were glad to have him back! Returning to the Cooks’ Forest area allowed Michael to enroll at Penn State DuBois, an hour’s commute away.

Now, he had the chance to access technology, complete interactive projects with other students, become involved in faculty leadership and further develop the leadership abilities he knew he possessed!

Thanks Penn State DuBois!

Where to next? Join Michael as he takes his first classroom-based course and constructs a website, learns Microsoft Excel, gains experience in marketing, learns to utilize data bases, becomes hooked on logistics...and much more!